

CHAPTER 71
ACCREDITATION OF AREA EDUCATION AGENCY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

281—72.1(273) Scope. The purpose of Iowa's early childhood through twelfth grade educational system is to support learning for all students. Area education agencies, as part of that system, exist to provide school improvement leadership and services to schools and school districts in order to enable every learner to perform at higher education levels. The programs and services of an area education agency are subject to accreditation by the state board of education as specified in Iowa Code section 273.10. These rules apply to the accreditation of area education agency programs and services.

281—72.2(273) Definitions.

"*AEA*" is an acronym for area education agency.

"*Board*" means the Iowa state board of education.

"*Department*" means the state department of education.

"*Director*" means the state director of the department of education.

"*Schools*" means accredited public and nonpublic schools located within the boundaries of an area education agency in accord with Iowa Code chapter 273.

281—72.3(273) Accreditation components. To be accredited by the board and maintain accreditation status, an AEA shall have an approved three-year comprehensive plan, an approved annual budget and plan update, and approved programs and services following a comprehensive on-site review.

281—72.4(273) Standards. These standards list the requirements for the educational, special education, and media services provided by an AEA. The following standards shall be used to accredit AEA programs and services.

72.4(1) General. The AEA's programs and services provide leadership in the area of school improvement, support proven or emerging educational practices, and are designed to enhance the learning opportunities of students.

a. The programs and services are:

(1) Accessible to all accredited public and nonpublic schools located within the AEA's boundaries in accord with Iowa Code chapter 273.

(2) Coordinated with other agencies, such as postsecondary institutions, community services, other AEAs, and schools.

b. The AEA may use consultation, information retrieval and dissemination, and continuing education and other processes to deliver programs and services.

c. The programs and services may be delivered directly, through contractual agreements, and through collaborative arrangements with other educational or community agencies.

72.4(2) School-community planning. The AEA provides programs and services that support and facilitate school-community planning. These programs and services include, but are not limited to:

a. Methods and processes which assist schools in conducting needs assessment, determining the major educational needs of students, developing long-range goals, establishing and implementing plans to meet the goals, and evaluating and reporting progress to the public.

b. Creating collaborative relationships with other community agencies to provide services to students and families.

72.4(3) Professional development. The AEA provides programs and services which facilitate professional growth of instructional, administrative and support personnel. These programs and services develop skills, techniques, knowledge, and understanding of educational research and best practice, and model best practices in professional and organizational development. The programs and services support school improvement processes and practices, provide for the development of leadership in education, and address professional development activities as required by Iowa Code or administrative rule.

72.4(4) Curriculum. The AEA's programs and services support and facilitate curriculum development, instruction, and assessment in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics and science. These programs and services advance research-based methodologies and include, but are not limited to, providing assistance and training in the following:

- a. Collection and analysis of student achievement data.
- b. Establishment of rigorous and meaningful standards in reading, language arts, mathematics and science.
- c. Development of a knowledge base of best practices in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics and science.
- d. Application of appropriate and effective instructional practices and content expertise for reading, language arts, mathematics and science, including the integration and application of knowledge and skills in applied learning, and which address the diverse learning needs of students.
- e. Use of qualitative and quantitative assessment techniques and activities for reading, language arts, mathematics and science.
- f. Application of curriculum development processes.
- g. Integration of technology.
- h. Application of curriculum development processes, standard setting, and assessment practices to other curricular areas.

72.4(5) Special education. The AEA provides services that support and assist schools in the provision of a free, appropriate education and full educational opportunity to children, between birth and the age of 21 and to the maximum allowable age in accord with Iowa Code section 256B.8, who require special education. These services include the following:

- a. Implementation of a process to identify students who require special education that meets all the requirements of 281—Chapter 41, Division VII.
- b. Provision of support services and itinerant services and, as required by Iowa Code, administrative rule, or contract, other services described in 281—Chapter 41, Division IX, and in accordance with the least restrictive environment provisions of 281—Chapter 41, Division VI.
- c. Implementation of procedures for developing, reviewing and revising individualized education programs that meet all the requirements of 281—Chapter 41, Division VIII.
- d. Implementation of a process for evaluating the effectiveness of special education services.
- e. Implementation of policies and procedures in accordance with the provisions of rules 281—41.18(256B,273,34CFR300) and 281—41.22(256B,273,34CFR300).

f. Provision of professional development opportunities consistent with the requirements of rule 281—41.20(256B,34CFR300).

g. Integration of special education and related services with other AEA programs and services, including a process that facilitates school district efforts in evaluating the effectiveness of special education services.

h. Process for monitoring of school district compliance with the provisions of all federal and state statutes, regulations and rules applicable to the provision of special education at least once every three years as described in 281—subrule 41.18(4).

72.4(6) *Instructional media services.* The AEA's programs and services supplement and support the media centers and services of schools. These programs and services include, but are not limited to:

a. Consultation that provides awareness of, information about, and guidance for materials use, technology integration and use, facilities planning, collection development, media management, hardware and curriculum support.

b. Delivery of information and resources both physically and electronically.

c. Information services which include educational or education-related research, information retrieval, and electronic distribution.

d. Instructional resources which provide print, nonprint and electronic resources that support professional development, and teaching and learning through provision of a lending library, cooperative buying, preview capabilities, and duplication and distribution.

e. Producing, duplicating, and preparing materials to include publishing, production of instructional materials, production of educational support materials, and teacher production and work area.

72.4(7) *School technology.* The AEA has a technology plan that is based on the needs of the schools served and includes collaborative partnerships with schools and other AEAs in the provision of technology support, products and services. The AEA's technology services supplement and support school improvement efforts and include, but are not limited to:

a. Consultation and technical services that focus on technology plan development, technology and learning, advancements in technology, technology infrastructure requirements and design, and technology resource requirements.

b. Professional development that emphasizes training in the general uses of technology, the integration of technology with curriculum, instruction and assessment practices, and the use of technology as a professional productivity tool.

281—72.5(273) *Discretionary programs and services.* The following programs and services are not required of an AEA, but may be provided as requested by schools. These may include, but are not limited to, areas of management, organizational culture and climate, early childhood, career preparation and other curriculum areas such as social studies, languages, fine and performing arts, and physical education.

281—72.6 Reserved.

281—72.7(273) Indicators of quality. The department shall use the following indicators of quality in evaluating an AEA's programs and services. The department, in cooperation with the AEAs, shall determine and periodically update appropriate methods and criteria to document progress.

1. The programs and services address specific student, teacher and school needs evidenced in local school improvement plans.
2. The programs and services assist schools in improving student learning evidenced through student performance.
3. The programs and services assist schools in improving teaching evidenced through the adoption or application of practices, strategies, and information.
4. The programs and services are cost-efficient and timely.
5. Levels of use and quality measures are used to determine customer satisfaction with programs and services.

281—72.8 Reserved.

281—72.9(273) Comprehensive plan. Each AEA, using forms provided by the department, shall submit to the department a comprehensive plan describing its programs and services.

72.9(1) Plan contents. At a minimum, the three-year comprehensive plan for an AEA shall include:

- a. A summary of results from needs assessments conducted to collect input from schools which help determine appropriate programs and services.
- b. A description of the agency's programs and services, including how the programs and services align with school improvement plans.
- c. A description of the organizational structure that supports the efficiency and effectiveness of services.
- d. A description of how the agency addresses and supports multicultural, nonsexist approaches and the diverse educational needs of students.
- e. A description of the intended results.
- f. A description of the implementation of the plan, including personnel, budget, collaborative efforts with other agencies, and the method of service delivery for each intended result.
- g. A description of the evaluation system.

72.9(2) Plan submission and cycle. In order to provide a three-year approval cycle, each AEA will submit a plan by January 1, 1998, for the period July 1 through June 30, according to this schedule:

- a. Five AEAs, identified by the department, will submit a plan for a two-year period and for a three-year period thereafter.
- b. Five AEAs, identified by the department, will submit a plan for a three-year period and for a three-year period thereafter.
- c. Five AEAs, identified by the department, will submit a plan for a four-year period and for a three-year period thereafter.

72.9(3) Approval process.

- a. The comprehensive plan of an AEA shall be reviewed by a team of department staff members appointed by the director. Following the review of an AEA's plan, the team shall recommend to the director whether the plan meets the requirements of this chapter. The AEA shall be provided with the opportunity to respond to the review team's report.

b. The director shall present the review team's findings and recommend action by the board. The board shall determine whether an AEA's comprehensive plan is approved. A plan may be approved in part and subject to the remedying of deficiencies or omissions.

281—72.10(273) Annual budget and plan update. Each AEA shall submit to the board an annual budget as required by Iowa Code section 273.3 and a progress report on the agency's three-year plan.

72.10(1) Annual budget. An annual budget shall be submitted to the board, on forms provided by the department, no later than March 15 preceding the next fiscal year for approval. The board shall review the proposed budget and agency plan and shall, before April 1, either grant approval or return the budget without approval with comments of the board included. An unapproved budget shall be resubmitted to the board for final approval no later than April 15. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1999, and each succeeding fiscal year, the board shall give final approval only to budgets:

a. Submitted by an AEA accredited by the board or that have been given conditional accreditation by the board as described in Iowa Code section 273.3(12) and subrule 72.7(4).

b. That demonstrate support for the agency comprehensive plan and yearly update.

72.10(2) Plan update. An AEA shall submit with its annual budget a written progress report on the agency's three-year plan on forms provided by the department. The report shall identify the agency's progress on the plan's intended results and any changes or modifications to the plan in response to the agency's ongoing monitoring of progress. The report shall be reviewed by a team of department staff members appointed by the director of the department. The review team shall report to the director its findings and recommendation regarding approval of the report. The AEA shall be provided with the opportunity to respond to the review team's report. The director shall present the review team's findings to the board and recommend action by the board. The board shall determine whether an AEA's annual report is approved. An annual report may be approved in part and subject to the remedying of deficiencies or omissions.

281—72.11(273) Site review.

72.11(1) On-site review. An accreditation team shall conduct one or more on-site reviews of the AEA for evaluation of its programs and services. Prior to an on-site review of an AEA, the accreditation team shall have access to the AEA's three-year plan and annual plan updates as well as any other information collected by the department relating to the AEA.

72.11(2) Accreditation team. The membership of the accreditation team shall be determined by the director. Each team member should have appropriate competencies, background, and experiences to enable the member to contribute to the evaluation visit. The team shall include at least four members, but not more than seven members. The team shall include, but is not limited to:

a. Department staff members.

b. Representatives from large and small schools served by the AEA being evaluated.

c. AEA staff members from AEAs other than the AEA that is being evaluated for accreditation.

d. Other members with expertise as deemed appropriate by the director.

72.11(3) Accreditation team action. After an on-site review of an AEA, the accreditation team shall determine whether the requirements of this chapter have been met and shall make a report to the director with a recommendation as to whether the AEA program should receive initial accreditation or remain accredited. The accreditation team shall report strengths and weaknesses, if any, for each accreditation standard, and shall advise the AEA of available resources and technical assistance to further enhance the strengths and improve areas of weakness. An AEA may respond to the accreditation team's report.

72.11(4) State board consideration of accreditation. All AEAs shall be deemed accredited upon the date of implementation of these rules. The board shall determine whether an AEA's programs and services shall remain accredited. Approval of an AEA's programs and services by the board shall be based on the recommendation of the director after study of the factual and evaluative evidence on record about the standards as described in this chapter and based upon the timely submission of information required by the department on forms provided by the department.

a. Accreditation granted. Continuation of accreditation, if granted, shall be for a term of three years; however, approval for a lesser term may be granted by the board if it determines conditions so warrant.

b. Accreditation denied or conditional accreditation. If the board denies accreditation or grants conditional accreditation, the department shall notify the administrator of the AEA, each member of the board of directors of the AEA, and the schools served by the AEA within 15 days. The notice shall contain a description of the areas in which improvement or changes are essential for approval. The AEA shall be given the opportunity to present factual information concerning its services at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board.

c. Remediation plan. Upon denial of accreditation or the granting of conditional accreditation by the board, the director, in cooperation with the board of directors of the AEA, shall establish a remediation plan. The remediation plan shall describe how the AEA will correct deficiencies to meet accreditation standards and shall establish a timeline and deadline date for correction of the deficiencies. The remediation plan is subject to the approval of the board. Upon approval by the board, the AEA shall send copies of the remediation plan to the schools served by the AEA. The AEA shall remain accredited during the implementation of the remediation plan.

d. Implementation of remediation plan. At intervals prescribed in the remediation plan or at the request of the director, the accreditation team shall revisit the AEA and shall determine whether the deficiencies in the accreditation standards are being or have been corrected and shall make a report and recommendation to the director and the board. The board shall review this report and recommendations and shall determine whether the deficiencies have been corrected.

e. Failure to correct deficiencies. If the deficiencies have not been corrected within the time stipulated in the remediation plan, the board shall remove accreditation of the deficient programs and services. At the hearing before the board, the AEA may be represented by counsel and may present evidence. The board may provide for the hearing to be recorded or reported. If requested by the AEA at least 10 days before the hearing, the board shall provide for the hearing to be recorded or reported at the expense of the AEA. Within 30 days after the hearing, the board shall render a written decision approving or removing the accreditation. Action by the board at this time is final agency action for the purposes of Iowa Code chapter 17A. The department shall notify the administrator of the AEA, each member of the board of directors of the AEA, and the schools served by the AEA of the decision of the board.

f. Required response to removal of accreditation. The AEA board of directors shall take one of the following actions within 60 days after removal of accreditation:

- (1) Merge the deficient programs and services with another accredited and contiguous AEA.
- (2) Contract with another accredited and contiguous AEA or other public educational institution to provide the required programs and services.

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TITLE XIV

TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

(Effective October 12, 1988)

CHAPTER 73

ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES AND ENDORSEMENTS

[Prior to 9/7/88, see Public Instruction Department[670]Ch 70]

[Transferred to Educational Examiners[282]Ch 14, IAB 10/3/90, effective 9/14/90]

CHAPTER 74

RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATES

[Prior to 9/7/88, see Public Instruction Department[670]Ch 71]

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CHAPTER 75

CONVERSION INFORMATION

[Prior to 9/7/88, see Public Instruction Department[670]Ch 72]

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CHAPTER 76

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

[Prior to 9/7/88, see Public Instruction Department[670]Ch 75]

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